

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 ACDA-07 /102 W

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R 131647Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5473

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 0894

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP PFOR MR AG

SUBJECT: MAURITANIAN-ALGERIAN RELATIONS

1. LOCAL ALGERIAN "DIPLOMATS" WERE INFORMED ON APRIL 9 BY GIRM FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT THEY ARE NO LONGER WELCOME IN NOUAKCHOTT. MEETING TOOK PLACE ON ALGERIAN REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF STATUS OF REMAINING NIGERIAN CITIZENS IN MAURITANIA. ACCORDING TO MEMBER OF FORMER ALGERIAN EMBASSY STAFF, ALGERIANS WERE TOLD THAT FIVE BUSINESSMEN AND REMAINING TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS (DOCTORS AND TEACHERS) WOULD BE COMPLETELY PROTECTED BY GIRM, BUT THAT SAME ASSURANCES WOULD NOT BE GIVEN TO ALGERIAN "DIPLOMATS". ALGERIANS ASKED IF THIS MEANT FORMER EMBASSY PERSONNEL SHOULD LEAVE, AND MAURITANIANS SAID THEY WANTED ALL ALGERIAN "DIPLOMATS" TO LEAVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THEY PLAN TO LEAVE SOME TIME NEXT WEEK.

2. THERE ARE CURRENTLY ABOUT THIRTY ALGERIAN CITIZENS IN MAURITANIA. ALGERIANS HAD WANTED TO LEAVE BEHIND ONE DIPLOMAT TO LOOK AFTER THEIR INTERESTS. GIRM COMPLETELY REJECTED SUGGESTION THAT ANY MEMBER

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OF FORMER EMBASSY STAFF REMAIN IN NOAKCHOTT. DURING

NEXT WEEK OR SO ALGERIANS WILL "SECURE" THEIR EMBASSY AND RESIDENCE AND TURN CONSULAR FUNCTIONS OVER TO NIGERIAN EMBASSY. NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR IN DAKAR (ACCREDITED HERE) IS CURRENTLY IN LAGOS SEEKING INSTRUCTIONS AS TO HOW EMBASSY SHOULD PROTECT ALGERIAN INTERESTS. HE WILL COME TO NOUAKCHOTT IN NEXT SEVERAL DAYS TO IRON OUT ARRANGEMENTS WITH MAURITANIANS, ALGERIANS AND RESIDENT NIGERIAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES.

3. WHEN ASKED WHY POLISARIO HAD NOT ATTACKED VULNERABLE IRON ORE MINES AT ZOUEMAT SINCE END OF LAST YEAR, MEMBER FORMER ALGERIAN EMBASSY STAFF REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT POLISARIO HAD REACHED ARRANGEMENT WITH MINE EMPLOYEES (IT WAS NOT CLEAR AT WHAT LEVEL) TO REFRAIN FROM ATTACKING MINING OPERATION IN EXCHANGE FOR WATER AND SUPPLIES. ALGERIAN ADDED THAT POLISARIO, EVEN IF IT TRIED, WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DISRUPT SIGNIFICANT MINING ACTIVITY AT ZOUEMAT. AGAIN RESPONDING TO QUESTION, ALGERIAN SAID HE DOES NOT FORESEE SETTLEMENT OF SAHARAN PROBLEM UNLESS THERE IS CHANGE OF REGIME IN RABAT, NOUAKCHOTT, OR ALGIERS.

4. WE NOTE THAT IN SPITE OF HARDLINE GIRM POSITION ON DEPARTURE OF FORMER ALGERIAN DIPLOMATS, OBVIOUS SURVEILLANTS HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM ALGERIAN EMBASSY. ALGERIANS ARE ALSO EXPERIENCING LESS HARASSMENT THAN APPARENTLY WAS THE CASE SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. HANDY SIDE

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